**IT Applications**

**Onscreen design elements, p 233**

Onscreen solutions need to be carefully designed to create user-friendly onscreen productions.

From pg 234 complete the following in relation to the design elements to consider.

**PROPORTION**

* 1. **What is meant by the hierarchy of a page?**

A hierarchy means a system in which things are ranked one above another in order of importance.

* 1. **What factors affect the visual hierarchy of a screen?**

The proportions, or relative sizing of fonts and graphics, affect the visual hierarchy of a screen. The positioning of particular page elements, including whitespace around objects, the formatting of fonts and the use of animation, also impact on the prominence of an element in the visual hierarchy of a page.

**ORIENTATION**

1. **What does orientation refer to?**

Orientation refers to direction and aspect of elements of an onscreen page. In designing the layout, the interface design will consider all elements that are to be included on the screen, taking into account the visual hierarchy or prominence of various items.

1. **List some typical considerations for orientation of screen elements**

* The direction that the logo is to face
* Whether or not a graphic should be flipped over as a mirror image
* Whether a frame on a website should be at the top, bottom, left or right of the screen
* How text should be aligned

**CLARITY AND CONSISTENCY**

1. **What does clarity refer to?**

Clarity refers to how clearly the information on a screen is presented, and how well a user can distinguish between elements on screen.

1. **List characteristics of a clear screen**

* Should not crowded
* Appropriate choice of fonts size and style
* Suitable use of white space
* Correct resolution of graphics

1. **What is meant by consistency?**

Consistency refers to the use of similar, repeated or predictable features on a screen so that the user can navigate the information without unnecessary confusion or error. Using a similar layout for different pages of an onscreen product makes it easier for a user to understand a document or a website.

1. **List elements that can be used to support the consistency of an onscreen document**

* Company logos
* Headers and footers
* Font styles
* Numbering styles
* Search fields
* Navigation icons or frames

**COLOUR AND CONTRAST**

1. **What are the conventions for onscreen colours?**

Conventions for onscreen colours can be helpful in determining colour schemes.

* The most easily readable colours for a text are black writing on a white background.
* Avoid using red and green together, because colour blind people have difficulty distinguishing between them. Blue and brown together can also be hard to read.
* Limit the variety of different colours used on the screen
* Light or pastel shades (or white) are best for background colours. Avoid using bright, vivid colours except for an area you wish to emphasise.
* Blue is a standard colour for an unvisited hyperlink, changed to purple when visited. If other colours are chosen for links, they should remain consistent.

1. **What is the role of whitespace in assisting the contrast in an onscreen product?**

Whitespace refers to a section of an onscreen page that is empty of any colour or object. A balance of text, graphics and whitespace attracts the eye and makes all sections of the page easily identifiable.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF ONSCREEN SOLUTIONS:**

**Efficient and effective user interfaces, p 238**

1. **What is the user interface?**

The user interface is the point at which a user interacts with the information system. Hardware elements of an interface may include

* Screen
* Keyboard
* Keypad
* Mouse graphics tablet
* Touch screen

Software elements of an interface may include

* Operating system (Windows or Mac)
* Application software

**USABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY**

* 1. **What is meant by usability?**

The usability of an interface refers to users interactions with the interface. High-quality user interfaces are ‘transparent’, meaning the user does not really notice the interface itself – it is so easy to use that the user interacts with it intuitively.

* 1. **List some factors that contribute to increased usability**
* The interface should be unobtrusive, but clear
* Founded on thoroughly planned and logical information architecture
* Screen layout should not be unnecessarily elaborate and decorative
* Minimal buttons, bullets, icons, rulers, flashing graphics
* Option of turning off any onscreen hints or help features
  1. **Which fonts are used for headings and body of document?**

Serif fonts, which have small tails, should be used throughout the body of documents as they make it easier for the viewer to read. A San Serif font, which has no tails, is best used for headings.

* 1. **What is meant by accessibility?**

Accessibility refers to how easily a user can find the required information. A user should be able to find what they want immediately. Instructions for navigating help files are included in some applications to ensure maximum accessibility for all users.

* 1. **List examples of conventional navigation symbols**
* Question marks for help
* House symbol for home
* Backwards and forwards arrows to indicate previous or next
  1. **What other factors must interface designers consider?**

Interface designers should make things obvious so that the user feels comfortable to navigate the information. An unusual navigation scheme may be creative and look appealing, but users may become confused and not know how to interact with it.

* 1. **What are built in redundancies in an onscreen product?**

Built in redundancies in an onscreen product allow a user more than one way to perform the same action. These planned redundancies are deliberately included to offer greater accessibility to the information.

**APPROPRIATENESS AND RELEVANCE**

* 1. **What characteristics must an onscreen product have to meet the needs of its audience?**
  2. **List items to avoid**
* Highly technical language or jargon

**CHARACTERISTICS OF ONSCREEN SOLUTIONS:**

**Characteristics of effective information architecture**

1. **What does information architecture refer to?**

Information architecture of an onscreen solution refers to the way the information is structured and the way it can be navigated by the user. The information architecture of an onscreen product must be carefully planned, using appropriate design tools, such as a storyboard and site map.